deposit naturally acquires the shape of the pot, which is finally overheated and burns, while the salt block remains intact.

When the salt is finally prepared, the family group returns to the village. The temporary installations are abandoned and may be used by other families who may do with them as they please.

The salt is divided into two parts.

One part makes up the family reserves, reckoned according to the needs of each family in the group, clan, or village which undertook the exploitation. The rest is divided equally among all the members who took part in [110] the harvest, except that the chief and the woman who was in charge of the burning receive double shares.

The salt reserved for family needs is used in the preparation of food and remains the inalienable property of the family. The share distributed to the participants in the undertaking becomes their private property.

Each one of them, man or woman, disposes of his share as he sees fit. Most often the natives use this as trade goods. Among certain tribes, notably the Bloengore, Wadia, Banakara, and Bobole, the salt blocks are used as currency or as a common trade item whose value is determined by the weight.

Before our [Ed., European] penetration into the region and more especially before the introduction of legal tender and its imposition by the administration, salt played a much more important part in the economic life of these primitives.

At the present time, it is used only in local transactions.

The blacksmith and his family, for example, never participate in the preparation of salt. He exchanges the products of his trade, knives, arrowheads, or spearheads, for the stock of the salt makers. [111]

It even quite frequently happens that the salt makers sell their surplus as a mere commodity to the highest bidder. They bring it to market, display it for sale, haggle about the price in the same fashion as they do for cassiri tubers, smoked fish, smoked meat, or baskets of peanuts.

It is singular and interesting to note that the proceeds from this sale do not entirely go to the woman who owns the salt.

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[Ed., an example given by the author, from the third paragraph, page 111, through the fifth paragraph, page 114, is not translated.]

[114] This clearly shows that the proceeds from the sale of salt, the property of the woman, belong in equal shares to the husband and wife: to the woman because of her work, to the man because of his trouble and travel to put the product on sale.

Among the Wadja, Tumbe, Bobwie, Bwakura, and Bakwa, I had the opportunity to observe the same fact. As long as the woman herself goes to sell her part of the communally made salt, she keeps all the proceeds of the exchange, but according to

Fig. 64. Transport of Water Saturated with Salt, among the Bwakura.

native customs, when the husband is entrusted with the sale, he is entitled to part of the proceeds.

The proceeds, however, are not divided immediately after the sale. The total sum is put in a safe place, a hiding place known to both husband and wife. The couple accumulates the mitakos [Ed., a kind of metal currency]; they hoard them until the day when they both agree to divide them. Custom gives one quarter to the man and three quarters to the woman. [115]

This custom does not exist among the tribes east of the Bakwa. Salt grass cannot be gathered there, because it is very scarce in the region. The cousin of bananas and palm trees and the

Article II. The Bolfimbé

562 556 178 In the old days, if an extremely rich man wanted to show his affection for one of his daughters and show off his wealth, he made that daughter bolfimbé. Today this custom has almost completely disappeared. (1) It has been almost impossible to maintain the

> 1. On the left bank of the Lulaka it disappeared a good many years ago. The Injili still followed it until quite recently.

practice because of a greater distribution of wealth and the reduction of leisure due to the work imposed by the white man. This work has been imposed directly in the form of forced labor, labor on roads, economic projects, etc., or indirectly because a sum had to be raised for the payment of taxes. All this has made it more difficult to bring large numbers of people together for ceremonies lasting days and weeks. (2) Nevertheless, the custom must be described here.

> 2. One might suppose that the new uses of wealth made possible by economic development would have contributed to the disappearance of this custom. Theoretically such might have been the case, but in fact these developments were not involved in the change that has been noted.

562 556 [illegible] When a native wanted his favorite daughter to become bolfimbé, he had first to obtain the consent and financial support of all his kin. Then enormous preparations were made, for everything had to be special -- beverages, various foods, dances. On the date which had been set and made known through messengers to the entire region, an enormous crowd gathered at his house. Public festivities went on day after day. In an address suited to the occasion, he announced to those assembled his intention to set his daughter up as a bolfimbé. Two relatives or two of the father's wives then stripped off the girl's

562 clothing and dressed her in valuable furs, especially in part of the
576 pelt of a striped antelope called mpongi. In some villages she was permitted to wear leopardskin in front as well as in back.

Then the father would decree (-bkya) that since his daughter had become boliñkiñi she would always wear furs and would stop work-
[582] ing, and that she would be given in marriage only to a very rich and influential man, not to the first comer. Therefore, a synonym for boliñkiñi is lilua ôô bofiko, "child of the decree, a child set apart, forbidden."

This ceremony may be held regardless of the child's age, at any time between three years and adolescence.

When the ceremony is ended the girl withdraws (-olema, caus-tive -oja) into a hut specially prepared for this occasion, which is called lisika. Her seclusion lasts only a few months. When certain natural needs oblige her to leave the house, she goes out the back way through the banana grove and hides as much of herself as possible under a mat. She does not walk on the bare ground; her feet must not
[285] touch the earth. That is why mats are spread everywhere she steps. She does no work; her food is prepared by her mother, sister, aunt, etc., or by a slave. When it comes to her toilette, she washes her hands not in water, but in palm oil. [30] All these practices are marks of respect and honor.

When the period of seclusion is ended, the girl's father gives a second feast, with dances, drinks, etc., and the boliñkiñi comes out walking on mats. But there is no further ceremony. From then on the girl is no different from other girls. But she retains the sign of her distinction, the wearing of furs, and she does no housework.

[582] The marriage of a boliñkiñi always occurred very late, since a
[577] man who wanted to take her for his wife had to collect a good deal of wealth before he could take the risk of asking for her hand. Should his attempt prove fruitless, he was exposed to ridicule in the whole region.

189 Among the tribes living on the left bank of the Lulaka any
576 man who was rich and of good family could ask for the hand of a
582 boliñkiñi in marriage. Among the Inkili, on the other hand, the re-
582 quirements were more complicated. The suitor had to belong to another tribe or group. For instance, a girl who belonged to the

D. Holmberg--29 .M-S (ca. 1930) 1938 FOSS Mongo FOSS Nkundo

English group would be given only to a man from the West, the Nganyibu, or a neighboring tribe, but never to an English. All the English considered the boldsmbf their sister. Thus when the future husband went to the family of the boldsmbf to ask for her hand, every village barred his way by means of a fence. All the bride price valuables which he carried with him were taken from him, and an equivalent amount in various kinds of goods, such as hens, ducks, dogs, mats, etc., was substituted for it. That is, he exchanged bride price valuables for akoma valuables [dowry]. (1) The suitor could pass only when the

1. See Chapter II, Article VII.

village that barred his way had nothing left with which to continue the exchange. If he found his riches exhausted, he had to go back home to replenish the supply. Everything he gave in this [big] fashion was counted as bride price, [ring] (1) and everything he received was part of the akoma [dowry]. (2)

1. See Chapter II, Article VIII.

2. See Chapter II, Article VII.

It is understandable that under these conditions asking to marry a boldsmbf was a luxury that the common man could not afford. The suitor had to belong to a rich and influential family all of whose members would assist him.

When the suitor finally succeeded in clearing a passage to the father of the chosen one with sufficient treasure, the latter put no further obstacles in his way. As for the girl, she felt exceedingly honored and delighted that a man loved her so much that he would go to so much trouble and spend such a vast amount out of affection for her.

As for the rest of the proceedings, the bride price payment was made in the same way as for any other marriage. But when the

bride-to-be was introduced to her bridegroom, she walked toward him across a row of men. A feast was organized to celebrate this important and joyous event. Dances accompanied with a flow of beer went on for weeks, sometimes for a whole month.

The father gave his son-in-law a great many shawl (1) objects

1. See Chapter II, Article VII.

so that the bulkhold often became ydegwende or at least lily;ðojoko. (4)

4. See Chapter VII, Article IV.

He did not allow his daughter to leave without giving her at least one sidka to wait on her. (1) Thus when Beikhagt w'Somma of Lokhalala

1. See Chapter VII, Article III.

(Lo'Ala, Ngumba) married Bonjhagt, daughter of Dikoñ y Okélamba of Bompéma (Bo'Dik, Bagielk) (who died in 1934), the bride received from her father four bidka to do the work, as well as a young cousin who was to stay with her [34] to bring her firewood. In this way the father made sure that his beloved daughter would retain her honorable position as a great lady.

The husband, who wanted his wife to retain her superior status, now makes her his bulkhold as well. (1) The term was: dha'w'ulkhold

1. See Chapter VII, Article III. That is, unless she is his first wife. See ibid. and Article I.

dawá ñ wá' dha'w'ulkhold ña'kwa. He would say to those assembled: "Her father proclaimed her bulkhold, and I proclaim her bulkhold as well (a'dáá bá'ulkhol', ami mpá a'dáá'ya ñ mpá'ñá)."

What was the reason for the existence of this custom?

556 According to the natives it was a public assertion of the father's high
562 social position and at the same time the greatest token of affection he could bestow on his daughter; the two things were inseparable. Not every native had the right to make his daughter a boifimbé. On the contrary, he had to hold an especially prominent rank, that is to say, he had to be a wealthy, influential, and powerful head of a family. All the ceremonies, practices, and rules involved in this institution point in that direction. A comparison with the boifimbé wife (1)

1. See Chapter VII, Article III. Unless she is his first wife. See ibid, and Article I.

lends additional plausibility to this explanation.

556 As we have said, this custom is in the process of disappearing
562 completely. In certain tribes such as the Beloko, subtribe of the
178 Lifumbe, a substitute has actually been introduced. The favored daughter is dressed and adorned as before, except that European materials have replaced the fun. But the public character of the older institution has disappeared. The occasion is not surrounded with so many ceremonies. Finally, the girl is not called boifimbé, for a new name has been invented: it is bondeliffingola, "the white man raises (educates) her." [31]

Article III. Friendship

572 Friendship is not unknown to the Nkundó. It is founded on the same basis as in Europe. I have seen more than one instance of true mutual affection between persons who were in no way related. Among the Blacks with whom I have associated there are some whom I personally consider sincere friends and who have shown me real affection, helped me to the full extent of their powers, and shown me complete confidence. There have even been some who have not been afraid to place themselves in serious difficulties and who have gone so far as to incriminate themselves in order to clear me, thereby exposing themselves to troubles and sanctions.

593x 581 against the presence of love are based chiefly on the instability of unions, the high frequency of divorce, infidelity, and polygamy -- objections which we shall examine in somewhat greater detail.

593x 562 To judge the situation properly, we must first distinguish between the sexes, which are not at all alike in this respect. Furthermore, among women [42] we must distinguish between those who are wives of polygamous men and those who are not.

Let us speak first of all of the men. They seem superior to the opposite sex in the matter of conjugal love, at least if we base our conclusions on their greater fidelity. Divorce is almost always [586] caused by the wife. As a matter of fact, this is quite natural. The man marries at a fairly mature age and therefore becomes involved when he is well aware of what he is doing, while the girl most often becomes engaged before the age of discretion and is thus unable to choose according to her own heart.

595x On the other hand, the polygamous man's heart must be divided. As we will see suo loco, he has a special love for one of his wives. His love for the first one deepens, becomes more rational, more deliberate, whereas his love for his favorite would seem to be more a matter of emotion in the strict sense of the word. As to the others, he has usually chosen them of his own will and perhaps has even seduced them to the point of making them leave a previous husband. It would therefore seem unfair to deny the presence of some affection toward them.

562 593x 152 595x But is the term "love" still applicable? According to the European point of view, conjugal love is exclusive. Among the Nkundó this does not seem to be the case. It has often been said that the polygamist considers his wives, with one or two exceptions, as human capital, so many production machines. I would not deny that the harem constitutes human capital and a source of wealth, but in my opinion such a statement is much too extreme and absolute. In most cases a real affection for his wives must be attributed to the polygamist. I understand this affection to be a kind of love in reduced proportions. And I compare this situation -- mutatis mutandis -- to that of someone who loves several friends at the same time. It is

possible to speak of love toward several individuals in spite of differences in its intensity, depending on the various persons who [43] are its objects, although we may consider such a divided love as very imperfect. But whatever name one calls it and however weak in intensity one finds it, it is impossible to deny its existence.

Among women, it is necessary to distinguish between wives of monogamous men and those of polygamists, especially in the case of "supplementary" wives. It is not hard to understand that among the latter, love is more likely to cool. Since the husband must divide his attentions and signs of affection, if only to preserve harmony, the situation could hardly be otherwise, even without the fact of very early marriages. In addition to the above-mentioned case of the cooling of affection among wives in polygamous marriages, there is no question that in these marriages, a community of souls, feelings, and interests is not established between wives and husbands to the same extent as in monogamous marriages. However, one could not state as a general rule that the wife of a polygamist does not love him, at least to some extent, depending on the individual. To maintain a priori that a man cannot be loved simultaneously by several women is logically inadmissible and contrary to the facts. Here it happens quite often that a wife leaves her polygamous husband for another because she has transferred her love to the latter. It is for the exceptions that proof should be required. Even if there are many of them, they do not invalidate the cases of real affection.

When a polygamist returns home after a long absence, he is often the object of affectionate demonstrations by his wives which are surprising to Europeans. The women fall at his feet, embrace his legs, roll on the ground, and perform contortions out of joy and emotion. It is true that the freedom resulting from colonization has done much to cool these fine sentiments.

Is it beside the point to quote the saying of [44] polygamists' wives: bokungé fikafola bitéé, lolango fikafola botéma, "the bokungé tree divides its branches, love divides the heart"? And then there is the following fable which teaches true love: a polygamist who has three wives, is accidentally wounded and lies dying on the opposite side of the river. His wives run to the shore but find no canoe. The river is infested with crocodiles. The chief wives refuse to risk their

595 but appreciate marital fidelity the same way we do. A wife's un-
837 faithfulness is severely punished by the laws. But adultery may be discovered and known to all without causing shame or remorse. This is a marked difference between our way of thinking and that of the Nkundó. They maintain that a passing infidelity which is not followed through does not denote an absence of love for one's spouse, even if it is repeated. In spite of the implausibility of this statement, I had to accept it, for those who argued with me were so many, their positions so various, and they were really serious. Among them were a number of Christians with whom we are very satisfied and who conduct themselves admirably, as do their wives. They consider these errors to be momentary failings [48] due to passion, which permit love to remain. Indeed, often these men and women are models in the performance of their other duties. This misbehaviour is without doubt considered very serious -- their anger shows clearly that they do not consider it trivial -- but it does not exclude love and thus, as far as everything else is concerned, the spouses continue giving proof of it to each other.

Let us not forget that many elements may lead to a fall and that consciences may go far astray. On the other hand, the fact that a husband is tolerant, even to the point of exploiting his wife, does not exclude a certain love for her; a husband may be extremely indulgent and at the same time jealous to the point of crime. All that may be found among the Whites, after all. Love without the feeling of duty will not suffice to sustain a union.

Moreover, there is no dogma, no moral teaching based on religion, to restrain the instincts. And we should add that among these
● [562] primitive people, the woman's natural tendency to please, to submit to a man's desires, is highly developed. In Europe these feelings are channeled by the Christian religion and its influence on society. Here
[894] they encounter no direct obstacle except for sanctions. Before marriage sexual passion and all sensations connected with it and adjunct to it can be pursued without physical, moral, or social obstacles, at least at the present time. The surroundings in which a girl grows up and the example and conversations of her companions will tend even to push her in that direction.

conquered only by repeated assaults of passion. Thus it is generally known among the natives that young women used to seek refuge in their mother's house when the husband wanted to begin making use of his rights as a husband. The mother would try to persuade her daughter to submit to the law of life. But sometimes, if her child seemed too resistant, the mother made excuses for her and asked the husband to consider her daughter's youth. The man usually wanted to remain on good terms with his mother-in-law so he did not insist and resigned himself to waiting till nature influenced the spirit and heart of his wife.

Since young people were brought up in deep fear of dangerous relations, it should not surprise us that this feeling became a real habit and did not disappear spontaneously the moment a certain degree of liberty was permitted. As a matter of fact, could we not make similar observations in Europe?

This is the natural explanation for the praiseworthy degree of morality among adolescents in the past.

Nowadays all that has changed. The young people follow where their passions lead them. Not the slightest check is placed on their impulses. Parents pay only slight attention to the conduct of their children. [82] It is better not to inquire into the morality of modern youth. Husbands no longer respect the bodies of their adolescent brides, who are themselves quite used to a sexual life and eagerly look forward to it, and no longer know the feeling of "the fear of man." Should we then be astonished at the frightening decrease in the birth rate (1) and the ever increasing spread of venereal

1. The natives say that in the past young wives quickly became pregnant. And now ...

diseases, which seem to have been unknown in the past?

The reasons for this change will be investigated further on, under the letter C.

B. Between adults. Here the Nkundó are very lenient. There is a difference, however, between the socio-legal and moral viewpoints, although as we shall see the latter is influenced by the former.

A woman is entirely free, legally speaking, as long as the first payment on her bride price has not been made. No man has

exclusive rights over her. Hence the proverb: kifindwa ku ni ku fumbu fo lo nkhit, "kalumbu fruit found under the tree have no owner; they belong to the first person who gathers them." Thus a girl for whom nothing has been paid belongs to no one. A woman free in this manner does not infringe on the rights of any man in her sexual relations. There are therefore no sanctions against her licentiousness.

Furthermore, the discovery of her activities gives rise to no drama. At most more serious parents will rebuke children who go too far -- the girls because they abuse the body and reduce their value for a prospective marriage (1), the boys because they [83] run the risk

1. Not that a smaller bride price would be given for them. But a serious man would rather not take a woman for wife who has "run around" a great deal and therefore is more likely to commit adultery, to be unfaithful, and less likely to become the mother of a numerous progeny.

of financial difficulties (the dangers of adultery, indemnity for childbirth with death as a result, etc.).

Public opinion is even more lenient than the parents. This attitude is easy to understand: strangers need fear no unpleasant consequences. Errors of this sort are generally considered natural weaknesses, provided that they do not occur too frequently. For public opinion is hard on people who run from one to another; they are stigmatized with the name ehifefi, "unfaithful, flighty, without intelligence or reasoning powers," or ehifengi, a stronger term with the same meaning.

From all the foregoing should we deduce that every woman is free to indulge fully in fornication? On the basis of the above considerations we could frankly conclude the affirmative. The behavior that can be observed from day to day fully confirms this answer. Some people stray more or less accidentally, but for others the practice quickly becomes a habit. And it can be said of all of them that

they succumb to any favorable opportunity. The validity of this generalization is not affected by extremely rare exceptions which may be encountered and which are due either to a constitutional abnormality or to an extraordinarily firm Christian conviction. How should these observations be reconciled with the statement so often heard from natives that the situation was entirely different before the coming of the white men? It was not unusual to see young women not only abstaining from sexual relations but having such a "fear of men" that they drove away seducers and defended their chastity by hitting them with a stick.

When the woman did not accept the young man's proposition, she considered it a grave insult. The initiator was entitled to no indemnity "for blows and wounds." The women replied only in violent terms, in word or act. [84] Often she went and insulted the mother of the guilty party. When the latter was told the reason for this behavior, she could only turn on her misbehaving son and usually gave him a good talking to; if he was young enough she gave him a good beating. Thus the girl had every right to defend herself.

If the provocation gave rise to no complications in family or society, the parents paid a lot less attention. But they tried to teach their children discretion in these dangerous matters, though their instruction primarily took the form of a lesson after an error was committed, or sometimes apropos of an incident that had befallen someone else. Some parents were very severe. These attitudes were based on a vague sense of morality which was not deduced from philosophical reasoning or religious or superstitious ideas but which was innate and instinctive so to speak. In addition, the fear of excesses and eventual social consequences no doubt also played a considerable role. Excesses were feared above all, and an isolated occurrence was regarded more or less as a momentary weakness.

To form an accurate picture of the situation that existed in the past, we must not lose sight of the fact that, because of very early marriages, the number of young single women was necessarily limited.

The attitude toward single men was more lenient than toward girls, unless their behavior had any consequences and apart from the danger of their actions becoming habitual, leading inevitably to palavers.

Article XII. The Attitude Toward the Bride Price

1. What is the woman's attitude toward the bride price?

Only we Europeans can ask such a question. To the Nkundó mind it is superfluous -- in fact it is really stupid. The bride-price system is the normal system [178] of marriage. The Nkundó do not conceive of marriage in any other way. Without the payment of a bride price there is no marriage; the woman is not considered to be a wife, she is simply a slave. This notion is a necessary consequence of the bride-price system. Thus it is not surprising that the woman is very much attached to this system, and that under normal conditions -- that is, when there is no European influence -- she does not want any union without a bride price, for she would then be a slave. This is obvious. All these ideas are held together like the links of a chain.

2. Our attitude toward the bride price

At the beginning of colonization the European, government agents as well as missionaries, viewed with repugnance a marriage system based on the payment of a bride price. In their eyes it was neither more nor less than the sale of women and therefore a form of slavery. They felt they should counteract it by abolishing the bride price and introducing marriage in the European manner, which seemed more consistent with man's free nature. Many Blacks employed by the Whites as soldiers, laborers, etc., were thus married without bride price. Nevertheless, no direct action was taken against the system. Later it became apparent that it would be harmful to abolish this ancestral custom before it was possible to replace it with a better system. (1) In the end it was realized that the payment

1. It is not even enough to substitute a better system; those who are to benefit from it must understand it and be convinced that it is better.

men although their first marriage has not been broken and no new marriage agreement has been concluded.

The data given above provides no confirmation in the Nkundó tribes under study of the statement made by Engels "Les Wangata [The Wangata]," Revue congolaise, 1910, p. 30) that among the Wangata "her husband can exchange her . . . she can make no protest." (1)

1. The Ekunda apply the term lisenji only to an exchange of daughters or sisters. They have a specific term: mufinji. Note, by the way, that certain Mbelé tribes who practice a true wife exchange designate it by the same name: impfinji.

Article VII. Purchase

The purchase of women is not practiced by the Nkundó tribes under discussion here nor even by the Bombwanja. The practice is to be found only among the Elingi. What is involved is not a marriage by means of a bride price but a real purchase; that is, a man buys a woman from her husband for a certain sum. He does not go through the woman's parents, as in an ordinary marriage by bride-price payment, but addresses himself directly to the husband.

In general it is the woman who makes the proposal that a man buy her in this manner. Sometimes a man wants to take a woman and first comes to an agreement with her. Before the Europeans arrived such a situation generally led to a war between clans or villages. After an armistice the palaver was settled, and the [219] purchaser paid the husband. Nowadays, since the Nkundó no longer dare to fight because of the legal sanctions that inevitably follow, when a woman abandons her husband for another man who wants to buy her, the parties involved bring the palaver before the judges. As the woman wants only her new husband, and as, on the other hand, war and the punishment of women have been abolished, the first husband has no

alternative but to yield and settle the amount to be paid. (1)

1. This is the situation that has prevailed up to the present. The native tribunals have been given the power to punish the offenders and they are therefore obliged to decree the punishments designated. In my opinion, if the legitimate husband brings complaint, the court should decide in his favor, not only because the purchase of a woman is involved but also because there is a question of polyandry, since the marriage has not been dissolved.

The amount that the purchaser must pay the husband corresponds to the amount of the bride price. But since the valuables do not pass through the hands of the woman's family, the first marriage has not been dissolved. Thus the word used is not *jîngî* but *lindimbî* (from the verb *-dimba*, "to buy"), a term applicable to any purchase. The Nkundó also say *bákémbasa endé la njîngî*, "he makes a purchase from the husband" (literally, "from the payer of the bride price"). Instead of valuables equivalent to the bride price, the purchaser may give the husband a live woman to replace the woman purchased.

It is a common practice for the husband, in that case, to demand a second woman as well, who is a wife or relative of the purchaser, as an *ebísa* to the first. She does not have to be a real *ebísa*, that is, a relative of the first woman. She is an *ebísa* only in a very inaccurate sense. She bears a special name, *inokambénga*, "gatherer of pepper," to indicate her role as a helper serving the woman who has been handed over in payment or acquired by means of the purchase price.

Finally, the purchaser (*bosómbi*) must establish the bonds of alliance between himself and his new parents-in-law. For that purpose he makes a payment of valuables to them in addition to the original pride price. Although in practice [220] this payment

constitutes a bride price. It does not bear that name because its legal significance is not the same. The specific name for this particular payment is kugyambiko, from -gyaga, "to add something new" and mbiko, "path." Thus the new husband adds a new alliance. The verb kuyaga or kugyaga is also used under other circumstances: for a new tile or leaf that is added on to a damaged spot on a roof, for a patch on a piece of clothing, or for something that has been newly introduced. The term therefore seems to indicate that what is involved is not a new marriage but rather a modification grafted on to the old one. Furthermore, the term is often used pejoratively. One may thus suppose that this custom is not very ancient, but of course the evidence is not sufficient.

It is apparent from the above that the purchase of a woman is a difficult and expensive operation. A kind of second bride price (kugyambiko) and a second wife (kukambitsa) cost quite a fortune. In the past the purchaser also had to pay indemnities to the families of men killed in combat (he might have had to pay as much as 100 rings, for the price of one "corpse" was 15 to 20 bakunga, the monetary value of a man) (1). One gets the impression that, though for reasons un-

1. Five dead were an enormous number in this sort of "war."

known to us the tribes in question permitted the exchange of women in their laws and customs, they did so unwillingly, and that the persons in authority increased the difficulties, so to speak, in order to frighten the amateurs and to reduce the number of cases to an inescapable minimum.

One might wonder why men do not hesitate in the face of such great financial difficulties. Psychologically, it seems entirely plausible that a man who is in love with another's wife and has the necessary wealth would in his passion throw himself into such an adventure. Probably that is how the practice originated. But this likelihood does not explain the existence of a purchase, since the breaking of the first marriage and the commitment to a new one could just as well be

recourse to the eminence of a third party who -- for remuneration, of course -- undertook to carry out his project. This task was usually confided to farmers, who did not disdain this type of work, which was quite suited to their taste.

The fact that the law gives the husband the right to punish his wife [271] for the type of oratory under discussion meant that a wife had to exercise some discretion in her choice of expressions. Fearing violent reactions, she often spoke the most serious insults subtly.

Since the European penetration women are more daring. For their husbands fear European justice, which follows principles entirely different from their ancestral law. Thus they complain bitterly of the insolence of their wives: "We have become slaves; the women are now all-powerful. They may do as they please, for we can no longer do anything to them." But as soon as native courts are sufficiently educated and are freed from what an eminent colonial jurist has called "the jurisdiction of palavers" (1), they will no doubt effect

1. See A. Sohier, Bulletin des Séances de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Vol. 6, 1935, 1, p. 60 and passim.

a salutary change in this situation.

The emancipation of women is one of the factors that have increased the frequency of divorce. For a man who cannot avenge continuous outrages remains dominated by shame, and the presence of the one who is the cause of it must become unbearable in the long run; whence the indifference, antipathy, hate, and the inevitable results of that permanent confusion in the household.

Men among whom the feeling of modesty was highly developed hanged themselves out of shame instead of attacking the guilty wife. That is what many natives have maintained in talking with me. Nevertheless, I have no knowledge of a present-day example. When this happened, the wife's family no longer took action against their daughter. Nor were they obliged to pay an indemnity, although their child had brought about the death. They simply had to acquit

to which she devotes her time, sitting on a couch or a log, so occupies her attention that she is no longer aware that her narrow garment is no longer in its proper modest position, and the gossip is therefore exposed to shame and ridicule.

In addition to giving his wife a good whipping, the husband also brings out his vocabulary of invective and sarcasm. The woman does not run the risk of complaining, for she knows in advance that she will be placed in the wrong. Nevertheless, the discreet husband will not go too far. The elders suggest that the young people moderate the violence of their expressions. For, they say, "a woman is more sensitive to it than a man; she might go and hang herself in the forest," lɛkinya ɛyɛkɔmɔ lɔ́ lɔ́ nɔ́nyɛ́, "lɛkinya (the ant) will [325] hang herself one day out of an excess of shame" (this is a reference to the way this insect bites into a blade of grass or some other object and dies rather than let go). "And above all," they say, "do not extend your insults to your wives' parents, for they could urge their daughters to leave you."

With respect to adultery, the punishments prescribed in Nkundó law will be examined below in Article VIII.

It is apparent from the preceding description that the Nkundó attach relatively little importance to the outpourings of loquacious eloquence characteristic of the weaker sex as long as they do not go beyond limits or degenerate into outrageous and ignominious insults. The elders teach youth to be calm in the face of these demonstrations of the declamatory art at which most Negresses are as adept as our fishwives at home.

They say that a woman is like an elephant: bɔ́mɔto ale [562] ɛ nɔ́ku. There is nothing to be done about her. It is futile [280] to try and speak gently to her; she does not even listen. To impose silence on her is impossible. To try and calm her, make her listen to reason, is a waste of effort. It is the same with an elephant: He [325] can perhaps be chased away with cries and noise, but he will destroy the crops nonetheless.

The fact that a woman readily opens her mouth is not considered a sign that she does not love her husband. The Nkundó even

payment rightly owed, and in the absence of an adequate translation, "indemnity" is still the least inaccurate. (1)

1. The words used for "reward" are bokondo, which is a reward for an unusual service, like the capture of a leopard or another "royal" animal (nyama ya bolulo, such as a python, an eagle, etc.) or a beautiful dance, and mbeta ji, which is a reward for small services.

One point remains to be noted. The two forms of punishment, violence and indemnity, may not be combined, and this principle is applied in all situations (2). Should this prohibition be

2. For example, see also Chapter VIII, Article III, 1.

construed as an implicit condemnation of violent measures? Or have we here the use of a system of settlement? It is difficult to settle this question, and actually the two explanations overlap at least in part.

It is not without interest to note that, in order to justify sanctions against the accomplice, the Nkundó invoke his frequently dominant role in adultery. Actually they reason that a woman is weak by nature; her emotions predominate, she is easily led and resists enticement only with difficulty. A man on the other hand is more reasonable, better able to control himself. Sanctions enacted and applied against the wife alone would not only leave out the punishment of one of the two culprits,but they would also be inadequate for the preservation of social order, since the woman remains exposed to succumbing out of weakness in spite of the penalties. The severity of Nkundó law with regard to the corporal punishment of the wife, which exists in spite of these considerations, are explained in terms of the woman's sensitive nature and of the power her husband has over her which he lacks in relation to her accomplice.

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D. Against the go-betweens (1) Nkundó law permits all sorts

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1. The Nkundó generally use go-betweens to tender invitations to women, these are frequently children between the ages of six and fourteen. The disastrous effect of such a practice on the bringing up of young people is easily understood. In some groups it has inflicted a real moral evil.

of invectives, blows, and a good whipping. Formerly the most serious situation arose if a woman was called directly. In the past, if favored by circumstances (especially the social position of the families involved), certain of the more jealous and bold men caught the go-between and sold him as a slave. This punishment was entirely legitimate, even though the person for whom the go-between acted was the one primarily guilty and therefore the prisoner's family could attack him on that account. People cite the rather recent historic case of Bonkfid in Bokao of Ikenga (Mbombá, Wängasé), who sold a Bonwa named Bompóto into slavery because the latter had brought a lover's gift to Wélya, his favorite.

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E. Conclusion. In examining the various sanctions that Nkundó law provides against adulterers and their accomplices, we are struck by a noticeable difference among the cases. Although a wife has certain means to check her husband's misconduct, she is unquestionably less well armed than he. This is a logical consequence of the nature of Nkundó marriage. A husband defends his "property," whereas a wife is not an "owner." Furthermore, in this realm the requirements are stricter for a woman than for a man. Even in Europe the misconduct of a man is judged very differently than a woman's weakness, the latter being considered much more serious and shameful, even though -- in an absolute sense -- the two are equal. Finally, the system of polygamy plays a role, for it tends to weaken a wife's love and consequently her jealousy, so

that she becomes accustomed to her husband's relations with various other women. Consequently, the reaction of the women is general [222] against adultery is much weaker than that of the men. Moreover, because of this same system, a woman is much more exposed to weakness, and stronger sanctions are therefore necessary to insure her fidelity.

Finally, there is one last reason for considering a woman's misconduct as more serious. It is the danger of conception through adultery, with all the attendant consequences: risks for the pregnant woman, forced continence for the husband, etc. (1)

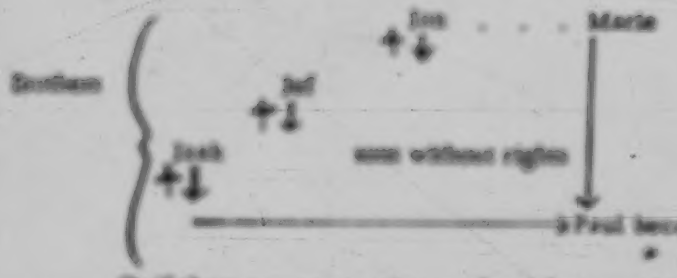
1. See no. 6 below as well as Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3, and Chapter X, Article II, 2.

From the description of sanctions it is apparent that in spite of the woman's inferior position, Nkundó law does not leave husbands the full and complete freedom which, according to certain writers, they are accorded among other peoples. Even if the means of repression available to the wife do not incontestably prove that the husband has an obligation of conjugal fidelity -- and the wife's legal status explains a great deal -- the fact remains that the nkonga as well as public opinion approve of even her violent reaction, proving that she is right and the husband wrong.

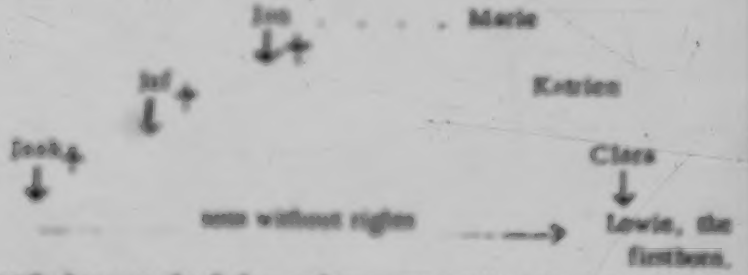
5. Public opinion

Public opinion is fairly lenient in relation to isolated instances (yɔ̃ɔsi, elonga). It clearly recognizes the error involved in infringing on the conjugal rights of another, but the error is attributed to human weakness. In the case of habit the situation is different; it is criticized frequently and severely. Habitual sinners are called efifi̱kɛ́ (from the verb fafoka, literally "to flutter" and figuratively "to flirt"), ebɔngɛ́ or ebɛ́bɔngɛ́ (from the verb bɛ̃ɔnga) or ebɛ́bɛ́ (from bɛ̃ɔa) "to flutter, to be flighty and fickle." These epithets are applied primarily to women, who are more subject to this failing than men.

their sister, hence we obtain. As an example:



Or if there were more sisters, the rights passed to the firstborn son of these sisters, for instance:



He consequently became the father and supreme head of the family upon the death of the three brothers.

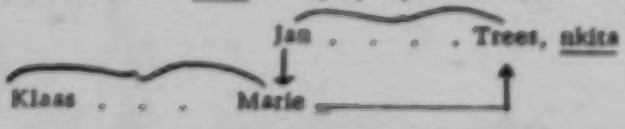
In order to understand this peculiar custom clearly, some explanations should be given. The custom in this country is that the woman is sold; not a single one escaped that general rule in former days. With that money the father or brother bought, or rather, had to buy himself another woman. This wife belonged, however, to the daughter or sister who had been sold; the daughter or sister called her nkita, "goods" or "property." The children born of this nkita called her [the woman sold]: ia'e tomoto, "female father." Even if she brought male children into the world, the rights of their mother passed to them, and [334] their mother was called father by the children of the nkita. According to our ideas, they were only nephews. That held even if the woman was still not paid for; it was enough that a ndanga, a security as proof of further payment, had been given. It was also not

576 necessary for her father or brother to have brought her to the man and
573 to have received money for her; another member of the family was
sufficient. She was said by her family and accordingly, whoever the money had remained or whoever had received it, she had her rights in the family. Since the family maintained itself through the sale of the children of the female sex, the male children born of them were considered as the women, the rightful claimants, the fathers. There was no exception to this rule; it was not to be altered, and no one had ever thought of disputing the place of the claimant or of laying claim to his rights. I have only heard of one single case of that sort, namely, at the succession of the Bahi, the younger brother was said to have killed his older brother in order to take over his place. He was said to have made a hole in his brother's prow, so that it sank when it reached the middle of the stream. The matter in itself seems an impossibility; also I consider it a legend, unless an accident might have happened that was interpreted in a mistaken or deliberately false manner.

576 The rightful claimant, bona wa nkasa, sister's son, might
574 still be a child; nevertheless he was called father and everyone vied with one another in showing him the honor due a father. That was the unbreakable law, not only for the father common to the hamlet, bolui, but also for the father of each individual family.

Nkita

583 Nkita is what the woman is called who is bought with the money
602 that the father or brother has received for his daughter or sister on the occasion of her marriage. In reality, however, she is only the nkita, goods or property, of the sold woman. Nkita ekam, "my property," this woman calls her. For instance, Jan [338] sells his daughter, Marie, to Klaas and buys another wife, Trees, with the money received. The latter woman is now the nkita, the property, of Marie.



583 searching for old disputes and old arguments about wives to get a wife.
604 And then they were still not always successful, their youth itself was against them here and robbed them constantly of the little that they
464 had saved for that purpose. The means for getting money, such as lances, knives, arm and foot bands, were extremely scarce. The Blacks do not know of workers or servants, and if one of these poor souls presented himself at the home of one who was better endowed by fortune and offered to chop wood for him, to lay out a manioc field, or to build a house for him, to gather straw and bamboo in the forest for that purpose, then the inborn laziness of the Negro would require long months to complete that work. As salary, the worker received only a few bokonga (copper arm or leg bands), these he already owed to the owner for having shown too much inclination for one or another of
589 his wives. The result of this was that many young men remained without
595 a wife and that those who were favored by chance, that is to say,
562 had many children of the female sex in their family, each had several wives. I consider this a primary cause of polygyny. The women had a relatively high monetary value and represented capital. Thus, it did not happen that anyone gave his daughter or sister to another for nothing, just as among us it does not happen that a farmer gives his cow or horse to a poor devil for nothing.

583 If the father or brother sold a daughter born of the nkita of his
604 daughter or sister -- a right that general custom gave him and which
603 usually occured, since the children of the female sex were sold very young and the boys, the rightful claimants or owners, in that case were still very young -- this was done in order to buy another wife. The rights of the children shifted then as follows:

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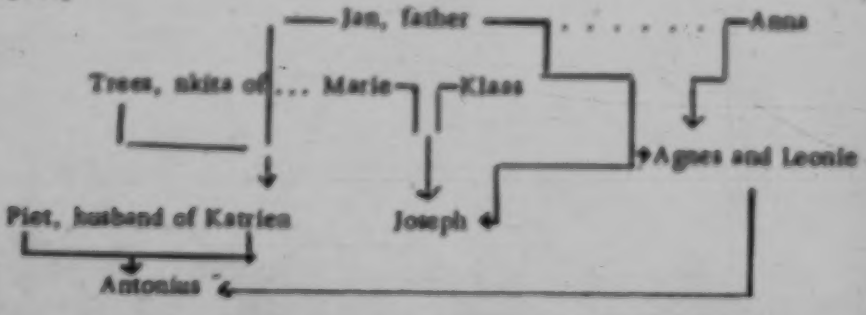

583 Jan, the father, by selling Katrien, the nkita of his daughter
604 Marie, becomes indebted to Joseph, the son of Marie and at the same
603 time his own grandson; and on the other side he becomes the debtor of Antonius, his other grandson, by selling his mother, Katrien.

Anna, whom he bought, was then the nkita of Katrien and the quasi-nkita of Marie. Both sons, Joseph and Antonius, were hard pressed because of Anna, the nkita of both of their mothers. If Anna bore two daughters, as I have indicated, the case was simple: the first daughter belonged to Joseph and the second to Antonius. If, however, she gave birth to only one daughter, then this child belonged to Joseph, and Antonius was left out in the cold. If father Jan had no children of the female sex by Anna, then the matter was extremely thorny for both of them, and if their grandfather or uncle possessed no money, had no more wives by whom he had daughters, there was nothing left for them to do but, at his death, to take the nkita of their mother as a wife. For this reason it happened many times that young men lived with old women, and even though there was then generally no more hope of children, those wives were then still good enough to cook the meals and do the little work that a Negro household requires.

000 I will not digress any further about the method of distribution of women, about the rights over the women which the nkita system brings with it. It would take us too far. Furthermore, not only the present, but also the past and the future are involved in it; so that one would have to be a Negro and raised in those matters to understand them clearly ... and even then they involve numerous palavers (disputes), which continually agitate the families and the villages.

[339] The Origin of the Nkita?

596 The sale of the woman and the immediate loss of her freedom
583 must naturally have given her cause for revolt. It has perhaps cost the
562 man a severe struggle to make the woman content with her lot. A compensation or reimbursement had to be given to her, and most certainly the nkita system has its origin there. It was at least a partial compensation that the man gave to the woman. It gave her rights over her nkita

596 583 562 and over the children who were born to the latter; even more, it gave her own children rights which exist nowhere else in the world and probably among no other people: they became the superiors, the fathers of the family of their mother. Unfortunately, practically considered, the woman enjoyed very little of the gift which was given her; she remained what she was, slave of money, slave of the man. Even her children, for whom the nkita-ship secured such great advantages in her family, brought them into a false situation, in that it robbed them in the home of their own father of all the advantages that it brought them in the home of their mother's father. It was only the old and well-favored who actually gained advantage from the nkita system and enjoyed them.

1) It relieved them in the first place of all care on behalf of their daughters whom they sold while still children; and if later, after they were grown up, these daughters complained about the injustice done to them, they could answer them, "But, my dear daughter, I have done you no wrong; here in my own house is the woman whom I bought with your money; she belongs to you always, and the children that I have by her are your children; you are both their father and their mother; they will call you is'eomoto (female father), and in that capacity they will honor and serve you; the boys will at the same time be the children of your children, and the girls will be sold to give your sons the opportunity to buy a wife for themselves."

2) It discharged them for the most part from all care of providing a wife for their sons, and it denied the latter the right to make claims to the women whom the father possessed. [340] If the son begged his father for a woman, he could put him off and say to him, "But, my boy, you have the nkita of your mother; the children (girls) who will be born of her are for you. We shall sell them, and with the money we will buy you a wife." Most of those girls, however, were traded by the father for another wife, since his son was still, in that case, small. Almost all the women then ended up in the harem of the father before passing on to the son. Thus, after all, the nkita system only benefited the lust and the lasciviousness of the old Negro and made him the one and only master of the woman. Sons, daughters, wives, and children were, in contrast, the dupes and victims of the nkita-ship.

837 When a wife of a polygynist had illicit relations with another
586 man of the same village, this was called Bonsamba. When she had such relations with a man of another village, this was called Isoke. As we have observed, the ordinary wives of the harem often had such relations. When the woman eloped with her bonsamba or isoke, or with whomever it was, she was pursued by her husband or owner, who tried to get her back. If the wife refused, negotiations over the bride price began.

If an agreement was reached or if a pledge was given as guarantee for the payment, the first bond was considered broken, and the woman was considered bound to this second man, even though he had been her bonsamba or isoke.

It might also happen that the first husband was so jealous that he did not want to make any agreement; then he attempted to kill either the guilty wife or her second husband. If the woman became
593 ill at the home of her husband, he went to tell her family and had to
758 give a security to the family.
583 Often the family came to get the wife, in order to be able to care for her better. If, in such a case, the wife [538] died at the home of her family, there were no further difficulties about the bride price, according to their customs. If, however, the bride price had still not been completely paid, the family asked their son-in-law to pay the remainder.

583 In recent times, now that the heathen customs have been
178 undermined by the European occupation, we see that the husbands whose wives have gone to their family when sick and have died there, demand the return of the bride price from the family, but this is completely contrary to their old customs. In one case the husband could demand the return of the bride price, namely, if the wife had left while healthy to go to her family and had died there.

● 562 Buying or Trading of Women. The woman was also in many
439 cases an acknowledged object of trade. The great village chiefs, among others Ibuka and Yoma, of whom we shall speak further, carried on a sort of woman trade. With European articles and also native currency, they went to other districts of the Equator [Province] to buy women with them, just like someone who goes to market, even though no public markets where women were sold actually existed.

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Ntomba

G24 An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and
[481] on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out
in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace.
[513] His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking
and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he
wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but
[514] must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in
each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom
[554] by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such
hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

G24 The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be
352 shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same
time as the *nkumu* are *mami*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for
[562] the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given
563] was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba zue*, persons in particular; they do not
count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'.
Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying
[672] that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what
would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer
restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon
it, *Nsuu* and *Mpeng*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily
by any special one.

G24 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food
262 only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not
enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu*
may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey,
but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to
partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child
should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep.
[765] The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by
them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu*
must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a
basket with high sides (*tsoko*), but in a shallow one (*mpala*), and no food that has
been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will
result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow-
[824] moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety
of yam known as *nunkiki* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *nunkiki*
that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary
for burial.

G24 Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in
[623] references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that
he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them.
[689] The rules affecting the *nsapo* of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There
must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *ehanga*. They fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *ekopo* is mourning, and the *molembe* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint. They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance at the other end of the village.

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *molembe* look for a successor among the *ekopo*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *molembe*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing:

Nkumbe w'oopiita elimbo
We olale we nko?
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *ekopo* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *molembe* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and the group sing:

Bole lusw-oo, lusola nkulu.
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *ipuna* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of wives, *bopika* and *iboto*. A third class, *boamba*, acquired by the payment of a very small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed by. A *bopika* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is the native expression. An *iboto* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying

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a successor to replace a deceased woman, and thus maintaining the balance between the two families. Such wives were seldom killed, for they had relatives who cared for them and would object, and who had the power to do so by refusing to fulfil their obligations and by retaining the bride price already received. The group of men and women gathered together for execution thus comprised males and *bopika* women from the 'free' group (*baoto*, as applied to all men and women not Batwa), and Batwa men and women whose owners had consented to their death. It sometimes happened that a man, seeing a woman among this group who took his fancy, might obtain her by paying for her in money or substituting one of his own slaves.

In some cases the executioner, *bomembe*, was chosen from among the family of the dead *nkumu*, in others he was selected from among the whole group of people over which the *nkumu* held sway. The man having been chosen, the knife is brought out of the house where it has been kept by some elder. This, a blade some sixteen inches in length, two-edged, decorated by alternating longitudinal lines of polished and blackened steel and inserted in a wooden handle, is sharpened on one edge, carefully wrapped in a plantain leaf, and laid away for use on the following day.

At dawn the prisoners are taken to the water and washed to clean them, inland towns accomplishing this purpose by dragging them up and down the village in the dew-drenched grass tied by a liana. The prisoners then are arranged in a V shape, the apex nearest the spot where the *nkumu's* body is sitting in state. Low seats are made by resting a stick in the forks of two perpendicular ones, and this cross bar is straddled by the victim. His hands are tied behind his back and his head tied to a sapling securely fixed at one end in the ground, the other bent down sufficiently to allow for tying the head with considerable tension on the rope. When all is thus arranged an expert drummer begins to pound out a rhythmic beat, and the ceremony of handing over the knife takes place.

The executioner of the day is dressed in finery but no camwood powder is evident, for it is a time of mourning and not of rejoicing. He wears a hat with many feathers, a vine encircles his waist, and bracelets of the same his arms. Then the man who last occupied the position of executioner comes forward. An elder has already brought the knife wrapped in its leaf and also a heap of ash on a leaf, both of which are placed on the ground. The old executioner picks up the knife while the new one faces him. The former demonstrates with gestures how he used to go about his work, the motions, the attitudes, the fine arts of the task. Even though the executioner of the day may have had previous experience, this part of the ceremony must be gone through. Then, holding the knife aloft, the instructor raises his right leg at right angles to his body, bends it at the knee so that the shin hangs perpendicularly, and the new executioner passes underneath it, returning the same way. He now faces the old executioner, who lays the knife in his own hands, arms outstretched and palms open, the handle resting in his right palm, the blade in his left. The new man, facing his instructor, places his outstretched and open palms on the shoulders of the other, draws his hands down his arms, finally coming to the knife, which, because of its position is thus received, handle in the left hand, blade in the right. Releasing his right-hand grasp of the blade, he stoops, sprinkles the blade with some of the ash, then rubs his right hand in the dirt to remove all slippery sweat. Then still

621 624 622 nkúmú. They, too, however, have only one man who opens a meeting and one investigating judge. Only one of the nkúmú has the function of judge. Consequently, we may say that even if the office is divided, the group still forms a unit as far as jurisdiction and political organization are concerned.

614 621 622 624 Among these groups we usually can observe a balanced system of distribution as far as titles and offices are concerned. It may either be predominantly democratic, as in Isangi, so that all groups may lay claim to titles and offices, or it may be oligarchic, as in Mbanga, where all power is vested in the oldest group of sons. In most cases, oligarchical groups tend to disintegrate; the younger groups attempt to free themselves from the rule. Democratic villages usually have a greater degree of cohesion.

In Isangi the small kinship groups of Ndongó (Nos. 2-4), Ngonga (No. 5), and Boyeke (Nos. 14-18) formerly had the privilege of furnishing the nkúmú. This practice has been discarded, and the honor is now rotated among the six local groups of the village. Only the small kinship groups of the Bolíma, Bestlo, and Njílókuli are excluded.

621 614 The six settlement communities of Isangi and similar groupings found in other villages are parts of a village which in my opinion are best described by the term hamlet [Weiler].

These are units which are predominantly intentional in nature. In spite of their functional weakness, they have survived even in the new settlement although they may not dwell together in a block. As a result of reintegration, they have lost their function as conscription district for the dancing groups in Isangi (see p. 25), but even at the present time they still represent the most important grouping in Isangi; we were aware of it before identifying any of the kinship groups. It is expected that they will lose their importance if Isangi does not return to its original site. By nature less closely connected with the organization of the village of their husbands, the women have become the point of departure for the new order of things (e.g., for dance groups) which fulfills the requirements of the new settlement conditions.

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